



Washington  
State  
Independent  
Living Council

## Quarterly Newsletter

March 2022

### Director's update

by Kim Conner, Executive Director

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family healthy and safe. As we transition from Winter to Spring we are excited about projects coming to fruition and the growth of the network working for the disability community. Below are some of the exciting opportunities and areas we are working on.

I'll start by announcing that WASILC has put a committee together to work on a Statewide Community Needs Assessment that will focus on the intersection of disability and race/ethnicity. A perspective, voice, and data that is lacking. The data we collect will better inform and change how policy makers and systems address the needs of the BIPOC community with disabilities.

The State Plan on Independent Living (SPIL) committee has begun working on the FFY23-26 state plan. Look for their upcoming survey soon. We value your input which shapes the development of the SPIL. One of the committees long-range goals is to have Centers for Independent Living serve ALL counties in WA state. We also are recruiting for the WASILC Council and Sub Committee members. See more information on page 2.

This month is National Deaf History Month, in this newsletter you'll find information on deaf history, myths surrounding deaf culture, and some do's and don'ts.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the longer days and spring flowers!

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# WASILC Council Recruitment

WASILC is recruiting for four council positions. Positions are open for individuals who represent or advocates for the disability community and Tribal VR Director. We are looking to increase representation from the following populations: communities of color, central, eastern, and coastal regions, and varied socio-economic backgrounds. Representatives will contribute their unique perspectives and insights on the opportunities, challenges, and barriers experienced by people with disabilities.

Please feel free to share this recruitment with your advocates, networks, and stakeholders. If you have any questions or would like to discuss being on the council, you can reach out to WASILC Staff at [wasilc@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:wasilc@dshs.wa.gov). Application deadline is April 30, 2022, [link](#).

## WASILC Committee Recruitment

WASILC is currently recruiting for the Youth and Young Adult Sub Committee (YYA) and the Legislative and Policy Sub Committee. The YYA Sub Committee provides youth and young adult voice to Council, disability community, and stakeholders in order to raise public awareness of youth and young adult Independent Living issues and the IL Philosophy.

The Legislative and Policy Sub Committee is responsible for educating and advocating within the Council, Legislators, and public and private entities in legislative and policy matters that affect people with disabilities and the IL Philosophy. The WASILC supports initiatives and legislation that strengthens IL Philosophy per the Rehabilitation Act.

Both committees include people with disabilities, advocates, and stakeholders from across the state. Please reach out to WASILC Staff for more information at [wasilc@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:wasilc@dshs.wa.gov). Applications are on our website at [HERE](#).

# Statewide Community Needs Assessment

A Community Needs Assessment is a tool that identifies the strengths, assets, needs, and challenges faced by a particular community. The council recognizes that there is very little information and data on the intersection of disability and race/ethnicity.

We are embarking on this project with the intention of providing a qualitative and quantitative report on the status of the intersection of people with disabilities and race/ethnicity. We believe that this report will inform policy makers which is crucial in changing systemic barriers that the *entire* disability community face.

## SPIIL Survey

We need to hear from you! Every three years Washington must write a new State Plan for Independent Living to show the federal government how funds will be spent. The plan includes goals and objectives for outreach, spending, resources, staffing, collaboration and partnership activities and ways to grow the network of service providers.

Time to write the new plan! The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) together with Washington's Network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) develop the goals and objectives based on needs assessment and consumer satisfaction surveys.

Share your thoughts! The Independent Living Network and Philosophy supports consumer control. This is the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs. They deserve equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities. Please take part in a survey, focus group or community forums to help us get the information we need to write a plan that reflects statewide IL service needs.

Here's the [link](#) to the survey. Take it! Talk about it! Share it!

You can find out more about upcoming community meetings and forums, as we schedule them, at [www.wasilc.org](http://www.wasilc.org) as well as learn more about WASILC and how to find a Center for Independent Living in your community. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to WASILC at [wasilc@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:wasilc@dshs.wa.gov).

# Deaf History & Culture

The National Association for the Deaf has announced the board has chosen April 1st-30th as the new dates for National Deaf History Month which provides a great opportunity for the world to educate ourselves on the community of people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Deaf Culture is the collection of cultural beliefs, practices, language, history, literature, and shared institutions of deaf communities that use sign language as a primary means of communication. These complex factors greatly impact how people experience the world. In the United States, more than 19 million deaf Individuals use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate.

“American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual language. It is a linguistically complete and natural language capable of conveying both concrete and abstract ideas. ASL has its own vocabulary, grammatical and structural rules. ASL uses signs, space and facial expressions as functions of language. Sign languages are specific to their communities and are therefore not universal.

Oralism, the idea that spoken language is often considered superior to signed language, isn't a new phenomenon. By the 1880s, notable figures like Alexander Graham Bell promoted oralism and assimilation to speaking culture so much that American Sign Language was banned in Deaf schools. Since then, d/Deaf/Hard of Hearing advocates have worked to reverse the stigma against gestural communication.

The link below is a Ted Talk by Marika Kovacs-Houlihan on “Deaf Ideology”. “Pathological ideology is an imposed view, stemming from values and beliefs, which place high value on speaking and hearing. Hence, the pervasive definition that “deaf” is a condition, a deficiency, which it creates a language delay, has become a fiber of our society. We need to challenge people to “react differently” when encountering the ideology of what it means to be DEAF. Deaf people are a culturo-linguistic community and when they are allowed to create their own ideology in their natural environment, they can, in return, be celebrated for their contributions to society.” Link to video here: [https://youtu.be/pLBw9nYI\\_Ks](https://youtu.be/pLBw9nYI_Ks)

# Myth Busters

**Myth #1: Sign languages are a kind of pantomime.** Although, a lot of signs in sign languages look like what they describe, that is not always the case. Sign languages have complex rules for forming sentences and there are over 170 different sign languages spread around the world.

**Myth #2: All deaf people can lip read.** Lip reading is hard and takes a lot of effort and concentration. Even the best lip readers can only understand 20%-30% of the message when relying on lip reading alone.



## ACTIVITY: LIP READING EXERCISE

**Choose a sentence and take turns communicating that sentence effectively. The receiver should only use lip reading to understand the sentence. This activity is meant to demonstrate how tricky lip reading can be, especially when communicating with deaf children who haven't had enough life context to fill in the gaps.**

**Myth#3: Deaf people can hear everything with their hearing aids or cochlear implants.** Hearing aids can help focus sounds and make them louder, and cochlear implants carry sound directly to the brain. But this doesn't mean that a deaf person can hear or comprehend information the same way as a hearing person.

### Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Thursday, April 14th from 10a-2:45p: Online via Zoom

All are welcome to attend. Join the zoom meeting from the [WASILC website](#).

# DO's & DON'Ts

**DO** speak directly to the person instead of the interpreter.

**DO** use eye contact to improve communication.

**DO** consider facial expressions part of the dialogue.

**DO** use learned ASL phrases by casually striking up a conversation.

**DO** speak slowly and clearly.

**DON'T** assume the person uses American Sign Language (ASL).

**DON'T** exaggerate your speech or increase your volume.

**DON'T** stare at two people signing secretly, they could be having a private conversation.

**DON'T** dismiss a topic because it's not easy for you to communicate your point. Example, "I'll just tell you later".

**DON'T** eat or drink while communicating as it makes lip reading more difficult.

## THAT DEAF GUY



## **Centers for Independent Living**

### **Alliance of People with disAbilities**

Seattle, WA  
206.545.7055

### **Center for Independence**

Lakewood, WA  
253.582.1253

Marysville, WA  
360.393.3890

### **Central WA Disability Resources**

Ellensburg, WA  
509.962.9620

### **Disability Action Center NW**

Spokane, WA  
509.606.4639

### **INDEX Spokane Center**

Spokane, WA  
509.606.4639

Check us out on  
Facebook for WASILC  
and CIEP news  
updates!

[WASILC FB](#)

[CIEP FB](#)



**WASILC stands in solidarity with the Black Community and all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. We fully support the Black Lives Matter movement and condemn systemic racism, oppression, and injustice. Achieving our mission requires us to educate and advocate for systemic changes for all people with disabilities, which includes the intersectionality of race and disability. We recommit to this vital work and will hold ourselves accountable to become better allies. We know we cannot elevate the disability community without elevating the BIPOC communities we serve.**

### **TELL ME MORE ABOUT INDEPENDENT LIVING!**

We promote the Independent Living (IL) Philosophy by empowering communities through advocacy, education, and collaboration. This philosophy emphasizes the idea people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, deserving of equal opportunity to decide how they live, work, and take part in their communities.

### **ABOUT US**

The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) is an eleven person, Governor appointed council that ensures Washington State delivers Independent Living (IL) services that are community based and consumer controlled for all disabilities. The primary purpose of WASILC is to monitor, review, evaluate, and maintain a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). For questions about WASILC and its mission please contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at 360.819.0672 or email: [kimberly.conner@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:kimberly.conner@dshs.wa.gov)

The Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP), a program of WASILC, is a statewide disability advisory group that provides technical advice on physical and programmatic accesses and effective communication strategies. Questions about CIEP and its mission can be directed to Jim House, Disability Integration Manager at 360.339.7435 or email: [jim.house@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:jim.house@dshs.wa.gov).

For general information on upcoming meetings, events, and resources, visit us at: [wasilc.org](http://wasilc.org).